

EXHIBIT 24



New stats show surge in violence at Rikers Island



Violence between inmates surged to 69.5 incidents a month for every 1,000 people in the jail population during the 2019 fiscal year, from 55.8 incidents the year before. | Beбето Matthews/AP Photo

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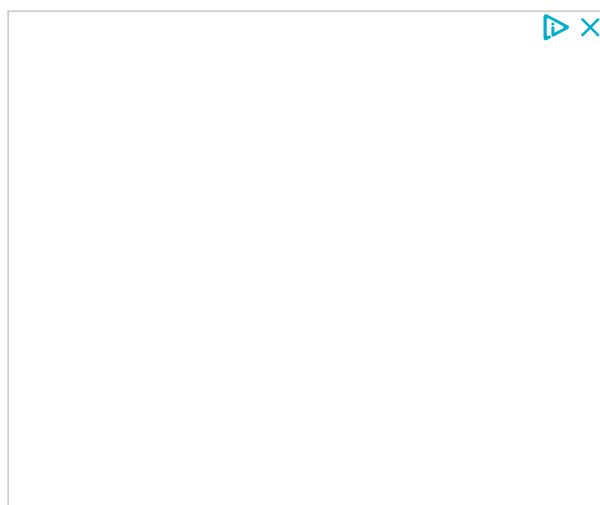
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Violence has spiked at Rikers Island, even as the city moves to shutter the jail complex and replace it with smaller local facilities.

Despite millions of dollars invested in efforts to stem persistent violence, statistics released Tuesday in the Mayor's Management Report show that inmate attacks on other inmates, assaults on staff and use of force by guards against inmates have risen significantly at all city jails — though most of the roughly 8,000 inmates are housed at Rikers.

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Violence between inmates surged to 69.5 incidents a month for every 1,000 people in the jail population during the 2019 fiscal year, from 55.8 incidents the year before. Serious injuries in those attacks also jumped, from 2 to 2.5.

Inmate assaults against staff jumped to 12.6 for every 1,000 detainees, up from 9.2 in 2018.

Use of force by correction officers against prisoners jumped nearly 30 percent, from 5,175 incidents in 2018 to 6,670 in the most recent fiscal year, which ended in July.

Officers also used force more often against adolescent inmates — 571 times, up from 478 the year before.

Mayor Bill de Blasio, who embraced the idea of closing Rikers after years of protests about brutal conditions there, is now pushing a plan to open four new jails to replace the problem-plagued complex.

The plan, now being considered by the City Council, would put new jails in each borough except Staten Island. The proposal has faced pushback from locals who object to the locations of the jails or think the buildings will be too tall. Meanwhile, activists on the left have opposed the plan on the grounds that the city should not be building new jails at all.

“It’s just another exclamation point on the urgency of closing Rikers Island. The violence at Rikers has continued almost unabated for decades across multiple mayoral administrations and multiple commissioners,” said City Council Member Rory Lancman (D-Queens) Tuesday. “At some point, people have to accept that the Rikers Island model is broken and we need a new model.”

“Safety is our top priority, and as the jail population continues to fall, we are now managing a population of people charged with more serious offenses,” said Department of Correction spokesperson Jason Kersten, adding that serious injuries to staff and prisoners had fallen and more officers are wearing body cameras. “We have zero tolerance for unnecessary and excessive use of force.”

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